

“I had always loved the Americans tradition known as ‘shaggy dog stories,’ those repetitive stories that take a very long time to tell until they finally end with some dumb punch line, usually a simple word play or an ironic remark, so my next operatic attempt, in 1978, went in that direction. The result was five chamber operas, about 15 minutes each, which I staged myself in a small loft space in Lower Manhattan.” (from [The Four Note Opera, 32 Years Later](#) by Tom Johnson)

Four of these short operas are still done from time to time: *Drawers*, in which a solo soprano searches for her thimble; *Dr*
yer
, in which a fisherman catches fish and hangs them on the clothes line to dry;
Door
, in which two women sing “yawn” a lot, and wonder whether they should answer the door; and
Window
, where two men strive to clean a dirty window.

Drawers (1978)

She looks for her thimble and finally finds it on her finger. Soprano and piano, text in English, French, German. 15 minutes, 10€.

Libretto:

1. Lost.
2. It's lost.
3. Where is it ?

4. It must be here.

5. Where is my thimble ?

6. I must try to find it.

7. It is not in my pocket.

8. And it did not fall on the floor.

9. Oh look, I have it on my finger.

10. Now I do not have to look anymore.

Dryer (1978)

The baritone catches fish and hangs them up to dry while the tenor looks on, wondering why. Baritone and piano, in English, 15 minutes, 10€.

Door (1978)

Someone is at the door, but the two singers are too tired to answer it. They sing many cadences on the word "yawn." Two sopranos and piano, 10€.

Window (1978)

The window is dirty and it takes 15 minutes to clean it. Tenor, baritone, piano, in English, 7€.